1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

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[VII]

Woman's Work Is Never Done

In traveling in Greece from south to far north, one finds numerous variations in family life. Among the Greeks of Slavic descent, who more and more are being assimilated into Greek national life, a man feels a strong sense of responsibility for his brother's family. Among the Vlachs described in the last chapter there is persisting prejudice against the dowry system common in Greece. The Turks of Thrace follow Islam unhampered and continue to keep their women in relative seclusion.[1] Furthermore, the Greek refugees who left their ancestral homes in Asia Minor in the 1920s brought many family patterns new to those whose forefathers had lived in Greece itself. The women in refugee villages of Macedonia, for example, have more independence of decision than do those of nonrefugee villages, according to those government specialists trying to promote programs of child care and home economics.

There are variations, too, in the extent to which the larger kinship group participates in (or interferes with) the activities of a particular family. In general, one can say that the kin will take over the orphaned children, but the aged are supposed to be taken care of by their own children and not by their other relatives. Furthermore, a man who has a favored position which carries a handsome salary is not required to distribute portions of his salary to less fortunate kin, but he is apt to give quicker service to rela-

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

The Bishop of Messenia and His Good Works

The contrast between an ordinary priest's home and the bishop's palace in Kalamata is quite marked, for the latter was once the ornate building housing the local branch of the Bank of Greece. But the bishop's interest in the people of his diocese, both the city dwellers in Kalamata and the farmers in the surrounding villages, equaled that of any priest for his parishioners. The bishop, when visited in 1953, proved a friendly, jovial person, with an iron-gray beard, a dignified though rotund figure, and a very forward-looking social philosophy. It was this latter quality in particular that had made me seek him out after hearing from friends in Athens of his unusual achievements in the welfare field.

He began to talk about what he had done and hoped to do for his people: "I became interested when I saw their great needs, for, as a church leader, I am responsible for the welfare of whatever people are under me." But before he started on any specific projects after his arrival in this diocese, he had thought it best, as he phrased it, "to put myself at the disposal of the people." He gradually gained the confidence of the members of his diocese by making available to them for local use all of the church's funds derived from festivals. The people began to realize that this bishop was interested in them. Later on, when he began asking them to support the various projects which he started, they gladly cooperated.

His first project was a day nursery, which takes care of one hundred and twenty children whose mothers are at work, started in 1947. Visiting this nursery in the afternoon when all of the children had gone home, we noted the cleanliness and the simple but adequate facilities. The success of this nursery prompted the bishop to start another one in Mycenae for one hundred children in 1948.

One perplexing problem was that of illegitimate children. In many cases the mother would kill such a child or leave it with people who exploited it unmercifully. So he started a home for these children in 1947. Since then, two hundred and fifty children have gone through the home, sixty of them have been adopted and fifty were there then. The equipment was simple and bare, but everything was spotless. When we entered, the children came up to the bishop with great pleasure, for he is a favorite with the young children. One of the nurses told us: "When we have a child that is lonesome, who won't eat, we ask the bishop to come feed the child. When he comes, the child always eats."

The bishop noticed, however, that many of the boy foundlings, but relatively few of the girl foundlings, would be adopted. The boys who were not taken by foster parents by their fifth or sixth year would go into the National Boys' Orphanage of Kalamata, largely supported by the state, which had one hundred and fifty boys in 1953. Something had to be done for the girls.

1:Sanders Z-5)4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

So the bishop arranged for nuns at a convent on the edge of town to teach some of the girls to spin and weave silk. For two hundred years the nuns of this convent have been leaders in the silk industry. In 1770, under the Turks, the nuns with their abbess were exiled to Constantinople, went to Broussa, and learned the manipulation of silk. Later, when they were able to come back to Kalamata, they brought with them the silkworm eggs and started the silk industry. Many local girls come to the convent to learn how to carry on silkworm production and weaving on a simple loom at home. So, the bishop thought, these same nuns would be able to teach these orphan girls the silk industry, and many other things as well. When we visited the convent, eighteen girls were living there, but buildings were nearing completion which would accommodate up to fifty girls. Queen Frederika had come to help dedicate the cornerstones. But the nuns were anxious to show us where they produced the fine silk cloth we had been admiring. It was a strange experience to go with the nuns into the big room full of textile machines and to see the dexterity with which these women clad in medieval garments managed the complex machinery, even to the point of making many mechanical repairs.

One institution which the bishop showed us with evident pride was a tuberculosis sanatorium. To reach it we had to ride from his palace through the town to a mountain a few miles distant. We could not help notice the people's affection for the bishop: men, upon seeing him, would take off their hats and women would cross themselves. Some of this, we knew, was done because he was a bishop and thus due a certain amount of reverence, but the expression of warmth on the faces of the people indicated their genuine appreciation of what the bishop was doing for them.

When we arrived at the sanatorium, the bishop explained: "Why should a few old monks have such a beautiful site to live in when tuberculosis was proving such a scourge to so many people? I told the monks they could go pray somewhere else and that we would make this into a sanatorium." Of course, the bishop admitted that he was oversimplifying the problem a bit, for even the Greek Orthodox Church has its red tape. In any event, he had succeeded in getting about twenty patients out into this healthful spot under proper care. One of the first things he did upon our arrival was to go check the menu posted in the kitchen, for he takes a personal interest in what is being served to the patients.

While at the sanatorium we noticed a number of donkeys tied outside and many peasant men and women sitting at the door of the little church dedicated to St. Elijah. We learned that many of these peasants had come quite far on this Sunday and had brought gifts of food and oil to the sanatorium as *psychiko*, a word which comes from Byzantine times and means property donated to monasteries or churches by pious pilgrims for the salvation of their souls. These peasants proved a lighthearted group, probably

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

the cities in the spirit of *noblesse oblige*. Under the circumstances in Greece today, nothing could seem more natural to the local people than to have the church, in the person of a gifted bishop, work out arrangements to meet their pressing welfare needs. How such a complicated network of institutions would be kept going should the energetic bishop not be around was a matter that gave one pause; but one must live in the present when human lives are at stake, and that is what the bishop was doing. He was following a well-established practice in making the church the channel for helping others.

The kind of help called *psychiko* is done for the soul, for the forgiveness of the souls of one's dead loved ones; it is customarily given in the form of helping the poor members of the community — the sick, the widows, and the orphans — out of purely Christian feeling. When some family is suffering misfortune in a village, the priest announces the fact in church and invites those who can help to do so. This is a form of aid in which those helping are not usually repaid, which makes it differ from the kinds of mutual aid discussed in an earlier chapter. In Koroni, in the western Peloponnesos, for instance, if a widow needs a crop harvested or threshed, grapes picked, or some field work done, the priest will announce that on such and such a day this widow has *xelassi*, as this arrangement is called, and those who wish can go to help. She feeds them, but they derive a spiritual rather than a material benefit from the work they contribute.

Or in Epirus, some important member of the community, not the priest, may send out the town crier or field guard to call from some height: "Listen, village, tomorrow we will carry from the mountain some wood for the home of Kyra Tassena, the widow of Tasso. All those who have mules must send them and those who haven't got any must come to help. Nobody must be missing." [18] He will then close with the proverb, *tona cheiri nivi talo kai ta dio to prosopo* (the one hand washes the other, and both of them the face).

Sundays and holidays, days on which peasants are not supposed to work in their own fields, are quite suitable for psychiko, or work done for the good of one's soul. D. A. Petropoulos, on whose article much of this discussion of psychiko is based, maintains that what characteristically distinguishes Christian philanthropy from ancient Greek philanthropy is that the first connects religion with the salvation of the soul, while in the ancient days help was given out of a purely logical understanding in order to have a normal social and communal system.[19]

The transition from this method of dealing with human need to the professional approach of contemporary social work is quite a leap. What progress is being made in training social workers in Greece is through the Young Women's Christian Association (but this again is a semireligious attachment), or through the Queen's Fund, providing scholarships at Pierce College.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

what they see that other communities have. Nothing is more irksome to those in one village than to be refused electricity from a power line passing close by when the current is made available to other villages in the region.

Most of the time, unplanned social change takes place as a response by villagers to forces from outside the village which impinge on their way of life. The response may be one of solid resistence to certain types of innovation, even though some individuals are for the change but unwilling to take the necessary social risk of advocating it. At other times, a selective change occurs when villagers choose some new items while rejecting others. They may welcome a new opportunity to send their sons away for more education, but demur at letting their daughters pursue a similar advantage. Now and then, the villagers may accept a new practice and give it a local twist not contemplated when the practice originated elsewhere. Women, for instance, have been given the right to vote, but how they exercise this prerogative depends much on local village opinion and the authority of the male family heads. Women who vote just as their husbands tell them to vote, a phenomenon common in many countries other than Greece, are not following the independence of thought and the privacy of ballot which supposedly accompanies the free citizen. But they do vote, which testifies to the fact that an innovation of radical proportions has been accepted.

This interaction between outside forces and the willingness or reluctance of local people to change are best brought into focus in the consideration of planned programs of change, which are confronting the villager on every hand.

Planned Change

Immediately after the end of the guerrilla war, programs of welfare and reconstruction were energetically initiated in rural areas which had suffered most. These were designed to help the villagers rebuild their houses and schools, replace draft animals or depleted flocks, obtain implements and seed. Food staples were also provided where needed. The orphans or otherwise dependent children were brought into special child villages, set up by the Queen's Fund for care and education, until old enough to go out on their own. But these measures, planned chiefly for rehabilitation, also carried with them implications for change. In doing so, they were following a trail previously blazed.

Americans past middle age, who contributed to the Near East Relief at the end of World War I, may or may not know that the funds donated so generously at that time were being put to good use long after the immediate relief needs had been met. Its successor, the Near East Foundation, chose Greece as one of its main arenas of operation. The attempts at rural reconstruction, or village improvement, by this organization in cooperation with the Greek government in the 1930s have been fully described by the educa-

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

first group of holdings. Once again, no brother knows which parcel of land will become his until after the drawing of the lots. Each man, therefore, has a strong incentive to see to it that the partition of the land holdings is as equitable as possible. If the mother of the men is still living, the brothers set apart several *stremata* of land which will become part of the share of whatever brother she elects to live with. This represents her dower right. Still other small parcels of land, on the order of five to ten *stremata*, are assigned outright to the brothers who are no longer farmers and do not live in the village. The token land is kept in their names, "so that they may remember their father," as one villager puts it. The conferees next turn their attention to their animal holdings and once again group these into parcels of equal value. Farm equipment and the outbuildings are treated in the same way.

Once the shares for each kind of property are decided upon, an enumeration of each share for each type of holding is written on a piece of paper and rolled up to resemble a cigarette. At that point, the women and children are called in and the time for drawing the lots has arrived. A neighbor or one of the children (never any of the adults in the family) is invited to draw the lots, first for the land, then for the farm animals, then for the equipment and outbuildings,and then for the houses. The moment is a tense one, for in spite of all efforts to equalize the shares some will be considered more desirable than others. The old house, for example, is not desired as much as one of the new houses, and the family that draws it may be disappointed. After the lots are drawn, the mother decides where she will stay. In one recent instance, she stayed with the brother who won the old house (he was not the eldest) because she felt more comfortable there. In another, the mother went with her younger son who had drawn a new house because his child was still small and her services as a baby-tender were needed.

When the whole procedure is completed, the personal effects of each brother and his wife and children are moved to the appropriate house, the furniture is distributed, and that night, for the first time, each family sleeps alone in its own establishment.

Descriptions given of the drawing of lots always convey the strong emotional involvement the participants have in the proceedings. The occasion heralds a change in the routines of life and in each family's attitude toward his property. The women tell of their tears and wails as they bid each other farewell before leaving to spend their first night in separate houses. They also describe their sensations of loneliness and strangeness under the new circumstances. The fact that the houses are almost always close together because they must be built on family-owned house sites in the village seems not to lessen the sense of dispersion as far as the women are concerned. The brothers continue as neighbors. They cooperate in agricultural activities much as unrelated neighbors in the village do: they borrow plows, draught animals, and other equipment from whoever owns it. In the meantime, the sisters-in-law may call on each other for help in the housework, they draw water from the same well, and their children visit freely in each other's houses. In other words, face-to-face associations con-

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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795 territory. Kato Nevrokopi, where the Greek Metropolitan has his
648 throne, is a large village, or *comopolis* (it had a pre-war population of
[162] about 2,000 souls), about twelve kilometres from the frontier.¼ The
722 whole of this region was evacuated by the civilian population in
166 March, 1941, when invasion seemed imminent, most of the refugees taking shelter in Drama, some forty-five kilometres to the southward. When the Germans abandoned eastern Macedonia to the Bulgars, all who were able to do so fled to Salonica, Verroia and other towns beyond the river Strymon. It was only after the withdrawal of the Bulgars in the autumn of 1944 that the Greek population began to trickle back.
727 In 1949 no less than twelve of the thirty villages of the diocese were
[736] in ruins and uninhabited, and the number of the orphans was said to
[34] approach 900. Kato Nevrokopi itself, though it still bore traces of the great battle which had raged about the forts of the Metaxas line and their heroic defenders, had come through the years of occupation and the more recent troubles almost unscathed, save for the deliberate destruction of the metropolis and the school.

796 It had been arranged that the Metropolitan should celebrate the
[795] liturgy next morning at the village of Dasoto, four or five miles away, which would be keeping its patronal festival. The day was ushered in by bugle-calls and a great beating of drums, revealing shortly after five o'clock that the newly-formed scout troop was already abroad. These
[533] martial noises were soon mingled with the soft ringing of a multitude
[512] of bells, as the cattle were driven out through the narrow paths between the cottages to the dusty river bed where they assemble each morning before moving off to the pastures. By a little before seven it had become
[402] evident that others besides ourselves were keeping the feast at Dasoto, as a few carts drawn by oxen or buffaloes, together with some solitary riders, rattled across the bridge and headed westwards. We followed
[487] in a jeep. Our path lay through fields of maize and tall sunflowers, above which occasional glimpses of a blue and white flag of vast dimensions indicated the scouts' line of march, along tracks which a heavy shower would render impassable to anything on wheels. Dasoto
[361] came into view after a quarter of an hour; a cluster of lime-washed
[342] cottages, the church prominent amongst them, on the lower slopes of the heavily wooded heights that surround the plateau.
[793] The parish priest and some thirty or forty men and boys had come as far as the outskirts of the village to welcome us. The Bishop's vestments,

¼ [i.e. Bulgarian frontier - ANALYST]

/11 cont./ conditions under which they had to move. At the present time there is some kind of temporary mobility such as working in other villages or sections for wages but they return back /12/ home again. The type of land distribution obliges every farmer to stay where he is. No one is allowed to sell his land nor hire it to anyone else. As soon as he does this he loses his ownership. With the increasing population and with ever-decreasing returns from the soil the future may present us with great mobility problems of the young men.

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Kinship Groups.

Kinship group solidarity is very strong among Caucasians and less among Thracians. Due to the compound family system which has already broken down since the distribution of the land by the government, one finds neighborhoods with strong kinship ties. Next to the family is the kinship group. Intermarriage is prohibitive among these groups. The kinship group is very different from the usual type that we know. If there is a widow or orphans or aged men or women, members of the kinship group feel under sacred obligation to care for them as they would do for the members of their family.

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Historical Background.

We do not have any historical data to show us the date of the first settlers of this village but the new /13/ resettlers came in 1922. It had had three different conquerors; the Turks in 1448, the Bulgarians in 1912, and the Greeks in 1913. It also served as the headquarters of Allied armies of the First World War. The trenches that surround it and the heavy concrete fortifications show its importance as a military post. People have come and gone. Nationals changed hands of the village, but the storks still find the same trees and roofs for their nests convenient, regardless of the nationality of the inhabitants. If the storks could speak the language they would tell the people of the futility of the differentiating nationalism. "Houses were torn down and new ones built,

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